



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Leo Gaeta,
Chair

March 3, 2004

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Executive Director

Representative Frank Chopp
Speaker of the House
Washington State House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

RE: 2SSB 6599

Dear Speaker Chopp:

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs would like to respectfully express its concern with 2SSB 6599, regarding cholinesterase monitoring. Last year, the Commission applauded efforts by the grower and labor community which resulted in an agreement regarding the medical monitoring of pesticide handlers exposed to cholinesterase-inhibiting pesticides. We were excited to see the fruits of that agreement with news of the first rounds of testing of pesticide handlers this year. However, we are concerned that 2SSB 6599 threatens to compromise this agreement.

We appreciate the concern voiced by agricultural employers that last year's agreement's lacked clarity in establishing responsibility for funding the testing. We thank the House for attempting to resolve this ambiguity by providing funding for such testing. Section 1 of 2SSB 6599, however, does not address the funding issue, and instead works to undermine the intent of the agreement reached during last year's legislative session. We do not believe that the funding ambiguity should be cause to wholly dismantle the April 2003 agreement.

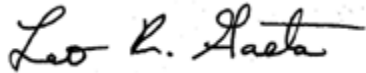
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The issue of monitoring was negotiated last year, and we were surprised to see it come before the Legislature yet again. Every day, we at the Commission receive more news about medical problems caused by pesticide exposure. Please allow the cholinesterase monitoring to go forward so that exposed farmworkers in Washington can at least be tested and protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leo L. Gaeta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Leo Gaeta

Chair, Commission on Hispanic Affairs

cc: Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos
Representative Bill Grant
Representative Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney
Representative Richard DeBolt
Representative Bruce Chandler